# CWM 38th Voyage® Communications Strategy

## Communications Infrastructure

The Communications Department at Mystic Seaport is tasked with the primary responsibilities of public relations and online and electronic communications. The Museum maintains a sophisticated media production team which the department can utilize for special projects.

**Staff:**

Director – Dan McFadden

Web Content Manager (25 hours/week) – Erin Richard

**Assets:**

Cision contact database and media clipping service.

www.mysticseaport.org and free social media applications.

**Access to:**

HD Video Production – Dan Harvison, Brendan Morgan

Still Photography – Andy Price, Dennis Murphy

Mystic Seaport Collections and the G.W. Blunt White Research Library

## Goals

The primary goal is to generate wide public awareness of the CWM restoration and 38th Voyage® to:

* Drum up excitement about the project and the work of Mystic Seaport.
* Support corporate sponsorship opportunities and individual giving.
* Encourage visitation to Mystic Seaport in advance of the 2014 sail or plans to see the CWM at one of the 38th Voyage® ports of call.

## Target/ Target Audience

The primary target is a broad, mass-market demographic. Priority should be given to placing CWM stories in media outlets with a national reach.

A secondary goal is to influence the following groups:

* Corporate executives with the ability to approve sponsorship or charitable gifts.
* Foundations and individuals of means with an interest in maritime history or track record of supporting history education.
* State/federal officials in a position to lend support to the project.

The expectation is successful mass-market placement can be used as a proof of concept to the above parties to solicit support.

## The Issue

The general population does not know about the CWM project or why Mystic Seaport believes the CWM and the legacy of whaling are important parts of America’s history.

## Message

The CWM restoration and the 38th Voyage® is an exciting, unprecedented undertaking that will connect you with an important part of our shared American maritime heritage. The CWM is the embodiment of the Spirit of American Enterprise®.

The message should inspire people to want to learn more about the CWM, to visit Mystic Seaport or follow the project online, and to financially support the project.

## Spokespeople

The following people are the primary spokespeople we would put out based on the particular subject matter (in parentheses). This is not an exclusive list. Each media request is a custom situation.

* Steve White (vision, overall project, institutional goals)
* Susan Funk (education, exhibit planning, interpretation)
* Quentin Snediker (CWM restoration, sail)
* Dana Hewson (CWM restoration, sail)
* Paul O’Pecko (Collections)
* Matthew Stackpole (General CWM history)
* Dan McFadden (general inquiries)

## Newshooks

The CWM is the oldest American merchant vessel still afloat. That alone makes her worthy of attention and restoration. Her story as a “lucky” ship is a compelling 170-year narrative.

Whaling is one of the driving forces behind American enterprise and industrialization, and as such is a crucial chapter in our economic –and cultural–history. Much of this history has been forgotten or never learned by the general public.

The knowledge, techniques, and skills required to carry out the restoration are fascinating and world-class. The Shipyard staff is literally scouring the country and the globe to find the correct materials to restore the ship. The restoration is a mix of cutting-edge technology and time-honored traditional practices.

Taking an 1841 wooden whaleship back to sea is an unprecedented undertaking.

## Communications Channels and Outlets

This plan recommends dedicating efforts across multiple channels, with an emphasis on traditional news media placement and online self-publishing to retain engagement and support social media community-building.

We would pursue content placement through the following channels:

* News media
* Op-Ed placement
* CPTV PSA campaign
* Website publishing (As part of revising the CWM section on the MS.org site, we would develop a CWM “news center” with blog updates, video, photos, and a new press kit)
* Email blasts
* Online social media engagement (including blogs)
* Mystic Seaport Magazine (Advancement)
* Direct mail (Advancement)
* Lectures/presentations (Advancement)
* Special tours/Media Day

## News Media

Since we are attempting to reach the broadest audience possible, all major forms of media are appropriate for targeting.

**Print:** News and feature articles in daily newspapers, Sunday magazines, monthly magazines, and niche publications.

**Television:** National and local broadcasters and national and regional cable news outlets.

**Radio:** NPR is the clear choice for national radio. It is the only network with a clear national reach and its demographics are favorable to the project. Regionally, WNPR, WBUR and WRNI are leading candidates. Other local radio should be pursued in the context of the port stops.

**Online/blogs:** Reach out to blogs and sites with likely or expressed interest in the CWM project. Use social media to drive engagement.

## Targeted Media Outlets

The following are the recommended media outlets I am targeting. The list is a mix of specific outlets (Smithsonian) and categories (national TV broadcasters). The reason for this is that some outlets are particularly valuable to us, whereas any earned media in an entire category is of value and the specific outlets are less important.

***Special Note:*** We must avoid any documentary TV and web video production per our agreement with Telemark Films, LLC. Broadly speaking, this means most cable television is off limits. Any online video posted by an outside source is similarly problematic unless it is part of a news story.

TV, Radio, Print:

1. National TV broadcasters (ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS). Ideal placement: “60 Minutes,” “CBS Sunday Morning,” “Today” show, any evening news)
2. Cable news outlets (CNN, MSNBC, NECN, FOX, CNBC). Must be spot news.
3. Regional magazine programs (e.g. Boston’s “Chronicle”)
4. Local TV broadcasters (NYC to Boston DMAs) with a goal to place stories that generate affiliate syndication.
5. NPR and WNPR (“All Things Considered,” “On Point,” “Where We Live”) plus regional stations.
6. Daily Newspapers of national note (New York Times/Washington Post/Globe and related Sunday magazines)
7. Wall Street Journal
8. Associated Press and Reuters
9. National Geographic
10. Smithsonian
11. AARP Magazine
12. Yankee Magazine and regional monthlies (CT, RI, Boston)
13. Maritime monthlies (Cruising World/Sail/Boating/Yachting/BoatUS)
14. Local daily newspapers in the region (Courant, ProJo, The Day, etc.)
15. Regional maritime press (Points East, Soundings, Windcheck, etc)

## Deliverables/Collateral/Events

Beyond personal outreach, most of this plan can be accomplished with press releases, media advisories, and media briefings.

Our Cision contract provides a contact database to assist in identifying promising editorial leads.

A CWM press kit, online and hard copy should be produced. It should include a project summary, history, fact sheets, bios, images for download, video for download.

## Additional Deliverables

One tool we do not have at the present time, but is strongly requested, is to develop a web newsroom and revised CWM section on MS.org. This would include:

* CWM news updates in a blog format with comments and social media integration
* Photo bank (public)
* Video clips (public)
* Live video streaming and webcams
* Press release archive
* Password-protected media download page for publicity images, video, and MSM logos

This is a direct, targeted way for us to tell our own story to the public and leverage the distribution online search can generate for us. It is also an effective way to maintain engagement across the term of the project. It is also a useful tool to pique reporters’ and producers’ interest in the project.

## Phase I: Now to the Launch

The campaign logically breaks down into two phases with some overlap. The first is the restoration of the vessel and the concurrent development of programming around the voyage. The second is the voyage, beginning the moment her lines are cast off to head down the Mystic River to New London.

In addition to pursuing general coverage as outlined above, we should identify significant milestones on the project that offer promotional opportunities. Potential candidates are:

* Significant sponsor agreement
* Announcement of state financial support
* Announcement of a state educational “Year of the *Morgan*”
* Installation of the shutter plank
* Arrival of a significant spar
* Placement of coins under the masts (or identification of said coins)
* Kick off of a small-gift fund drive aimed at children to generate a sense of public ownership of the CWM and the project. This would probably be targeted at Connecticut to instill the message that the CWM is “Connecticut’s Ship.” This would probably work best if there is a state educational partnership.

Obviously, the launch will be a significant moment. Special attention to ceremony, symbolism, and staging needs to be done. Naming the captain would be a good milestone for this event.

## Phase II: The 38th Voyage®

The 2013 ramp up to the 38th Voyage® requires additional work in the specific ports of call and planning for media participation in the voyage itself.

The most effective way to arrange for favorable coverage and cost-effective marketing in the local port market is to sign a media sponsorship with leading local outlets.

* New London: The Day, WFSB/WTNH/NBCCT, and WNPR
* Newport: Providence Journal and WPRI/WJAR/WLNE, radio TBA, RI Monthly
* New Bedford: Standard-Times and WPRI/WJAR/WLNE, radio TBA
* Provincetown: Cape Cod Times (if needed)
* Boston: The Globe, WHDH, WCVB or NECN, radio TBA, Boston Magazine
* Vineyard Haven: MV gazette, plus whatever Mr. Stackpole recommends

In addition to marketing the port call, these outlets would have an interest in previewing the voyage and sending reporters to Mystic. They would have preferential treatment over other local press and an interest in making sure the vent was successful and significant. [Need to get a term sheet]

Each port call will need to have a detailed plan for: ENG staging area and parking, media check in and credentialing, press previews/tours. Additional staff availability for media wrangling may be required.

[Voyage logistics TBD]

## Coverage Tracking

Mystic Seaport contracts with Cision, Inc. to provide media monitoring. This is comprised of web-based tracking of North American print and online outlets. Full text of articles is accessed through the Lexis-Nexis database.

This does not include TV or radio coverage. Limited broadcast coverage can be obtained on an a la carte basis for an additional fee. Currently TV and radio are tracked manually.

This service does not include pdf files of actual clippings. It is online text only.

## Evaluation

Cision provides a value for individual media clips based on an advertising rate-card algorithm. Further evaluation is up to senior management.

## Final Note

One aspect of this endeavor that has not been formally articulated is what the legacy of the project. What does it do for the Museum?